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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes that creativity (and the arts in teacher education) can serve yet another function: that of awakening students to the cultural lives they already inhabit in their diverse communities, while connecting them to other possible worlds and ways of being. The paper takes up the transitions that students make in coming to Brooklyn College, and examines the borders they cross in their journeys from home to school and from school to New York City's cultural institutions. It states that the oral history/storytelling project, developed for the undergraduate course, "Education and Literacy," is used to illustrate the role of transitions in the students' lives and in the lives of those whose stories they tell, as well as the place of cultural stories in the classroom. The paper draws on the students' experiences in this course with the Lincoln Center Institute and the Museum of Modern Art, an initiative that represents the kinds of transitions to the wider cultural and social worlds they will, in turn, introduce their own students to when they become teachers. The paper considers the developmental, social, and cultural transitions that teacher education students make as they become teachers, and how these transitions are further complicated when the students are recent arrivals to the United States. It addresses the chasm between student expectation of place and continuity of experience, and faculty desire to transform fixed classrooms into spaces for exploration and transformation. (Contains 21 references.) (BT)

Crossing the Brooklyn Bridge: The Geography of Social/Cultural Transitions

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Imagination, creativity, and the arts in education are celebrated for the fresh perspectives these can offer familiar experience, and for the opportunities they present to engage the unfamiliar, creating links between the known and the novel (Egan, 1992; Eisner, 1992; Greene, 1978; Jagla, 1994; Sarason, 1990). In this paper, I propose that creativity, and the arts in teacher education can serve yet another function: that of awakening students to the cultural lives they already inhabit in their diverse communities, while connecting them to other possible worlds and ways of being. This paper takes up the transitions that our students make in coming to Brooklyn College, examines the borders they cross in their journeys from home to school and from school to New York City's cultural institutions.

The oral history/storytelling project, developed for the undergraduate course, Education and Literacy, is called upon to illustrate the role of transitions in the students' lives and in the lives of those whose stories they tell, as well as the place of cultural stories in the classroom. The paper draws, also, on the students' experiences in this course with the Lincoln Center Institute and the Museum of Modern Art, an initiative which represents the kinds of transitions to the wider cultural and social worlds they will, in turn, introduce their own students to when they become teachers. In this paper I will take up the developmental, social and cultural transitions that teacher education students make as they become teachers, and consider how these transitions are further complicated when the students are recent arrivals to the United States.

I address the chasm between student expectation of place and continuity of experience, and faculty desire to transform classrooms from fixed places into spaces for exploration and transformation. Student experience of the place of creativity and the arts in their own learning will frame discussion of the tensions which arise from negotiating the spaces between familiar and new places, and suggest how the classroom can become a site for exploring student experience and its connection to pedagogy, and for negotiating the transitions implicated in learning.

In connecting students to the local cultural institutions, folklore and wisdom that reside within Brooklyn's communities through their research, as well as to such major cultural institutions as the Lincoln Center Institute (LCI) and the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), we ask our students to traverse the geography of New York City in ways both literal and figurative. The journeys they take turn on alternately taking leave of and returning to the culturally distinctive communities in which they reside, rather than representing the kinds of linear trajectories commonly associated with developmental gains. The first journey that students make is in coming to Brooklyn College, a large, liberal arts college situated in a residential are of Brooklyn, a borough of New York City with a very large immigrant population. In their daily commute to and from Brooklyn College, our students move between the culture of home in what is likely to be a culturally, socially and ethnically homogeneous community, and the culture(s) of the Brooklyn College campus, more than one half of whose students are immigrants or the children of immigrants.

The second journey we ask of our teacher education students is between what is often experienced as widely disparate worlds: the world of home and the cultural communities in which they reside, and the common culture of New York City, as represented by its cultural institutions. In moving between their home communities and the College, and between the College and Lincoln Center, our students traverse

what is often experienced as broad social, cultural, economic, and racial divides. Famously, the Brooklyn Bridge spans both of these worlds, connecting the Brooklyn of home culture and home cooking with the Manhattan of commerce and achievement. Statues which once graced the foot of the Manhattan Bridge, the Brooklyn Bridge's younger and less graceful sibling, and were relocated some years later to the entrance of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, captures this study in contrasts. Brooklyn is depicted as a mother bent over a book reading to her child, while New York City's (Manhattan's) gaze is turned defiantly outward, towards the horizon. The tension between the familiar and the comfortable (a source of both nostalgia and contempt) that Brooklyn represents, and the energy and sophistication that Manhattan claims in the local imagination are evoked in this iconography, and in the transitions we ask our students to make when they come to Lincoln Center.

I will begin first with describing the work in the undergraduate Education and Literacy class I teach which introduces students to an expanded definition of literacy, and calls upon them to conduct research within Brooklyn's communities, conducting oral history interviews, and connecting these stories to their applied work in literacy development. Discussion of the collaborative work with the Lincoln Center Institute will follow. The order of presentation is not meant to imply a hierarchical or temporal structuring of the work. Rather, the work asking students to locate themselves, as well as local and cultural forms in pedagogic practice is interlaced with the collaborative work in the arts in education with the Lincoln Center Institute.

Moving between home and school : Literacy and the oral history/storytelling project:

The course, Education and Literacy, is offered in what is typically, the second semester of the teacher education sequence for students majoring in early childhood or elementary education. This course, for which the students conduct an oral history/storytelling project, introduces a dual focus on: 1) children's language development and the role of literature in supporting literacy, and 2) the development of a sophisticated literacy base for teachers, which includes an appreciation of the broad role of creativity and the arts in education, specifically as these relate to literacy development. This base assumes continued development of teachers' a) expressive ability in the verbal, written, and other expressive registers and media, b) capacity to observe and reflect; c) select literature for children, and develop their capacity to engage with text through calling upon the arts and varied pedagogic approaches and
d) ability to consider multiple perspectives and interpretations regarding the meaning of both children's activities and literary works.

In describing this course and the oral history project, I call, also, upon the collaborative work with my colleague, Professor Marge Linney, of the Theater Department, in the paired courses in which we teach. The education class I teach is paired with Professor Linney's course, Performance Techniques for Teachers; students enrolled in the Education course register concurrently for the Theater course, as well. In their drama studies, the students learn an approach to literacy which centers on the reading of human movement for what gesture can reveal about understanding, intention, position, affect, and attitude. Performance is explored as an expressive and interpretive venue, literary works are studied in common in both the education and theater courses, and students perform soliloquies based upon their oral

history interviews. The work in theater challenges students to risk forms of expressions many are unfamiliar with and apprehensive about. It signals the role of the classroom as a place for thinking about new ideas and multiple interpretations, and new ways of thinking about personal capabilities. Reflecting upon the place of the classroom as a site of change, Elaine writes about her initial response to working in the paired courses:

> Initially, I did not really have an appreciation for literature or drama and I was not enthusiastic about having to take these classes. While I was growing up, I had difficulties reading and I associated books with my own failure. Additionally I was not exposed to many enjoyable books after the first grade. The books I did have to read were boring and underestimated my capabilities.... My apprehension about the theater class was out of my conditioning that drama was for flaky, uneducated individuals. Furthermore, my years in school had quashed my creativity...I was afraid because acting was something I had never done before and I was scared that I would be unsuccessful.

Her classmate, Annie recalls her anxieties about teaching and acting as she confronts, and ultimately overcomes her initial fears about both:

> I wondered why an education class was paired with a theater class. I asked myself, "What does drama have to do with teaching?" At first, I was always shy and was scared to perform in any of the activities Marge would have us do. I was scared that my classmates would make fun of me, of how I would present myself. After realizing this I asked myself, "Annie, if you are too scared to act in front of your classmates, how will you then be able to present yourself to children?"

The students continue to struggle with how they represent themselves and others as they research Brooklyn's communities. Employing the methodologies of oral history interviewing and critical reflection, they conduct interviews for the oral history/storytelling project which will later provide a base for writing books for children or adolescents/young adults that they will later read/perform in class. The students keep reflective journals of their research and writing experiences, and read drafts of their work-in-progress to children, engaging their audience in conversation. Often the children assist in illustrating the book; the interactions with the children around storytelling and writing provide both the children and the teacher education students with experience writing and thinking about stories.

The project illustrates a means of connecting students to the art forms and literary expressions that reside within their home communities, while developing critical awareness of the complicated nature of transitions which mark passages in their own, and in the lives of others. Critical awareness is especially salient to developing an approach to teaching which not only celebrates the contributions that varied cultural experiences bring to our lives, but appreciates the ambiguities, tensions and sensitivities which attend major transitions, including the transitions that occur when stories cross cultures and gain new audiences. Such tensions are often revealed in the stories that are gathered, and in the dilemmas created for their

storytellers. When stories assume a curricular role as a bridge between cultures, a common practice in multicultural education, we need to consider how stories that encode a culture's beliefs and ways of living in the world will be perceived through a different lens. An example of this dilemma was provided by a student of Dominican background who presented a cultural tale familiar from her own childhood, and one which had been passed down to her mother by her grandmother. By her own report it is an oft-told tale, one primarily told by women to girls.

In the story, "The Magical Orange Seed," a young boy, Kico and his mother, Dona Tata endure maltreatment at the hands of the boy's stepfather, Don Esteban, who is jealous of their loving relationship. The boy is compelled to perform menial, backbreaking labor while the stepfather's lazy son, Panchito, mocks him. Don Esteban deprives Kico of food; Dona Tata comes to her son's aid, bringing bread and milk to him in the fields. One day, Panchito spies Dona Tata bringing food to Kico. Kico is beaten by Don Esteban; Dona Tata faints. Kico escapes to the forest; alone, he cries for his dead father and prays. He is visited by an old man dressed in white and illumined by a mysterious light. The old man gives him an orange seed, instructing him that if he plants the seed and sings to it with love, the seed will provide him with food. Kico soon puts on weight, arousing the suspicions of Don Esteban and Panchito. They spy on him and uncover his secret. Panchito steals the orange seed; Kico discovers Don Esteban and Panchito in the orange tree, which continues to grow at an alarming rate. He sings to the seed asking it to transform the pair, rendering them "good," and adding that he "loves" them. Frightened by the heights the tree has reached, Don Esteban and Panchito beg Kico for forgiveness and agree to be good. Father and son are cured of their cruelty, and all live happily ever after, their home "filled with laughter and love." The old man in white reappears to Kico; he takes the seed, reclaiming it for another crying child who needs his help.

In the tale, "The Magical Orange Seed" questions about domestic violence, religious faith, and the place of memory are raised. The story is grounded within belief in the role of religious faith and prayer in ameliorating untenable situations and the role of the miracle in effecting cures, re. abusive behavior, while elevating the role of 'forgiving and forgetting.' The resolution of the story turns on the transformative nature of love, belief and faith, and on the role of the son in caring for the mother. The retreat of personal memory in the service of family harmony is unquestioned; forgiveness obliterates memory. The social and cultural horizons of this story are bounded by the role of religious faith, and concomitantly by the powerlessness of women and children.

When stories are re-examined through what I have earlier referred to as the middle ground, that disputed space between a story's meaning in the culture of origin and its meaning for a contemporary New York City audience (Korn, 1997), that in-between space becomes a site of negotiated meanings. In crossing these invisible borders, culturally determined meaning enters into dialogue with the socially constructed meanings that stories hold for audiences. The assumptions that underlie the stories that a culture tells are brought into relief when they are considered from a different cultural perspective. Gadamer (1967, 1975; Sass, 1989; Warnke, 1987) speaks of a "fusion of horizons" arising from the meeting of one's socially constructed horizon with other possible worlds.Neither story, storyteller nor audience holds a definitive interpretation, rather, all three participate in this coming together of

different layers of meaning. Multiple meanings, where only shared meaning once existed, is created out of the difference between story, storyteller, and audience. Difference provides opportunity for questions to be asked which might not have existed in a shared cultural world, and highlights the ways in which culture informs and shapes the stories that we tell.

Contemporary multiculturalism assumes diversity, a multiplicity of stories and views, in which the stories that comprise a culture are celebrated for their uniqueness and for the meanings they offer that can cut across cultural difference. Some questions that can be raised as stories cross cultures and cultural frames of reference are: How do diverse audiences hear these stories, what meanings do they hold for them, and finally, how do these meanings differ from the story's intended meaning and function? In a diverse society storytellers are not endowed with the authoritative stance they can assume within a culturally homogeneous group. Their stories are filtered through the lenses of their listeners as they respond to both the story and to the storyteller. A single story will yield multiple meanings, each imbued with the culture, history, and language of the listener. The storyteller's task becomes one of negotiating the cultural meanings that the tale may call up in its audience.

The various audiences of "The Magical Orange Seed," for example, heard the story differently as it was filtered through the sieve of the cultural and social expectations of each audience. The student/storyteller's mother, who heard it told by her own mother experienced it as an affirmation of faith's ability to overcome what seemed to be insoluble problems. For her daughter, steeped in the traditions of both the Dominican Republic and contemporary American society, additional layers of meaning accrued in the telling of the tale. For the storyteller hearing the story in the company of her Brooklyn College colleagues, the story was filtered through the audience's shared acculturation to the value placed on autonomy in this society. The students, additionally, called upon their own understanding of feminist perspectives regarding the position of women in society, and brought awareness of child abuse and domestic violence to bear on their analysis of the story.

For the teacher education students crafting their oral history interviews into books for children, this task often involves re-examining the taken for granted in their own social and cultural lives and anticipating how their stories will be heard by their intended child audiences. For teachers working with the stories children bring to school from their native cultures, this means listening for and confronting the problematics of moving between cultural worlds, each with its own set of beliefs and values. The oral history/storytelling project identifies, a role for the biographical and autobiographical in connecting curriculum to the lives of students and teachers (Aitken & Mildon,1992; Denzin, 1989; Goodson, 1992; Lincoln, 1993). It describes a process that yokes biography to autobiography, connecting curriculum development to the lives of students, and to a teacher's life, as well. It demonstrates, also, a process by which preservice teachers can begin to conduct teacher research within their own communities, learning to look again at the 'taken for granted" within their own lives, defamiliarizing that which feels familiar, and dignifying the lives and cultural experiences of family and community members. It serves as a reminder, too, that the lives of the children our students will teach will be as varied as the narratives they and their classmates will hear, and in many instances will recall their own.

Often the students research their own family histories, gathering folktales and

personal narratives, gaining new understanding and appreciation of their family backgrounds, and of the cultures and backgrounds of those they viewed as different from themselves. Ellen, for example, reflects on the transitions she has made from a homogeneous community and school environment, to her experience at Brooklyn College, where paradoxically, experiences of closeness with those she sees as different, have resulted in feelings of closeness which eluded her in her prior school experience. She observes, too, that this new environment of difference provokes critical thinking about perceptions and perspectives, leading to both personal growth and pedagogic considerations.

> As a result of our taking these classes (education and theater) simultaneously, I feel that we have all formed a close unit and gained a lot from our interactions. Throughout my years of schooling I had the same children in my classes and we never bonded. ...It is a wonderful opportunity to become acquainted with individuals from diverse backgrounds who broaden our limited perspectives. Being exposed to such different ideas and perspectives I had to maintain an open mind and choose my words carefully. I realized that we are judged and stereotyped based on perceptions and I did not want to perpetuate this error - or be on the receiving end of it. Lastly, I now understand that often times there is not only one answer and that we need to look at things from all the various angles and that we should encourage, not scold children for doing so."

The transition from the culture of home to the culture of school is further complicated for many of our students by their own immigration experiences. Barbara, who emigrated from Poland five years earlier, reflects on her experience of difference within New York, and within Brooklyn College. Assumptions about herself are challenged as she grapples with difference and learning within a diverse setting:

> Brooklyn College is different from Polish college. It is big and beautiful but at the same time kind of mysterious. There are many different people, different cultures and religions on campus. In my country there were not that many foreign people, the main religion was Catholicism and the main culture was Polish. But I like it here because it is a wonderful experience to be able to meet different people with different traditions. Now, I feel more comfortable here, maybe more than I have ever been in my entire life. I am glad to be here, where I have learned to be tolerant, to accept everything and everybody. I learned that I should not generalize people, I should look at each person individually. Meeting different people let me understand a lot of things. Even though I was considered in Poland a very open-minded person, here I have learned that it is not enough for this country.

An awareness of the historical value of the personal narratives and folkloric literature they were gathering sent students examining the school libraries at schools where they were assigned for field placement or where they worked in afterschool programs. Often, they were surprised to find how few materials were available for children which represented the specific cultures they were researching, and that were represented among the children attending the schools. This was especially the case

regarding folklore and narratives of Asian cultures, where a dearth of children's literature in English has been identified (Russell, 1997).

Telling tales: Biography, autobiography, and pedagogic practice

The task of connecting oral histories in which narrative and folklore overlay the geographic, social and cultural maps traversed, calls for authorial presence in the work. Students as researchers and as writers are very much present in the work, both regarding the personal meaning it holds for them, and the pedagogic decisions they make as they retell their stories for another, child or young adult audience. Engaged pedagogic practice implies that teachers will search for ways in which to connect curriculum to students' lives, helping children to locate themselves within curricular events and texts, developing a sense of ownership of their own learning.

The relationship of the teacher to the curriculum, though, is one that is often easily overlooked. As I read my students' journals and engaged in conversation with them about their work, I became especially intrigued with the question of teacher connection to curriculum. In her narrative, Barbara continues to write about the power of dreaming, her own affinity for the imagination of childhood, and the role that dreaming and imagining have played in her own life.

> I always loved to dream, believing that if someone wants something very much, sooner or later he/she will obtain it. ...I like to play with children because they have this very specific, big imagination which sometimes makes me laugh, but most of the time it gives me a lot to think about. As a child I always dreamed of going abroad, of meeting other people, of getting to know other cultures, religions, or languages. (I remember) it was a beautiful day. I took a newspaper and the first thing I saw was the advertisement about the lottery to win a visa to the United States. I wrote a letter with my mother's (biographical) data and sent it to the lottery. I forgot about it and went on with my studies. A few months later, we received a letter from the embassy informing us that we were one of the lucky winners. We were so happy, we were supposed to go to America, the land where dreams come true, where people live happily, where it is easier to do anything. That was the myth about America then. We came to America five years ago. I was so excited; everything seemed to be so beautiful, extraordinary and kind of scary. But soon all charm burst; I had to start working. For my whole life I did not have to worry about money, the only obligation I had was to go to school. I became very homesick. I missed everybody there: family, friends, food and so on I felt very lonely.... .

I too began to think about the oral histories I had never gathered: from my father, whose stories always left out more it seemed than they revealed, from my mother who died before I had the courage to ask, and from her shrinking circle of friends: aging women who had grown up in the same Polish hometown, surviving the ghetto and a succession of concentration camps together, finally settling within walking distance of each other in New York. Like my students, I too began the process of documenting oral histories. Like my students, I heard stories I had never heard before; in the listening, too, familiar stories shed their familiarity and took on a newness, a strangeness borne of close listening, working with text, and locating one's

position as audience. Like my students who interviewed their families, I too was a privileged audience, privy to gossip and to the intimate details reserved only for familiar audiences. Like my students, I too struggled with what gets told, and what gets left out in the retelling, and finally, where we as intergenerational narrators locate ourselves within the stories.

This work raises questions for me about developing curriculum that is meaningful for students and also for teachers. It suggests, too, that teachers can gain understanding of the dilemmas and of the passages that students face by drawing upon their the autobiographical and biographical knowledge and by engaging in the kinds of curricular activities and initiatives which they introduce to their students. When teachers, alongside their students engage with the curriculum, learning becomes shared enterprise which calls upon the creative processes of teachers and students, requiring an engagement of the imagination in considering their own, as well as the lives of others.

In listening to the readings of their classmates' work, a number of students commented on the poignancy of hearing stories which reflected the lives of the student/researchers, and that provided a point of entry into communities and cultures that seemed distant in their difference. Robin writes:

> "I was moved by many of the books, especially the ones that reflected on the author's life. Our class consists of so many different races and ethnicities which privileged me to learn about so many new cultures. There are so many similarities that Indian, Jamaican, Russian, Cuban and Puerto Rican cultures have with my Jewish religion. I was fascinated to learn this and now I do not feel so distant from these people any more. "

Engaged pedagogy, often described as artful teaching or the art of teaching identifies teachers as curriculum innovators and catalysts for the cognitive and emotional connections to text and other curricular forms that can promote student learning. Engaged pedagogy assumes the value of students' emotional and cognitive connections to curriculum; it needs to ask, also, where teachers locate themselves within their teaching and curriculum development, and question how both can become meaningful for teachers as well as for their students. Yasmin, an undergraduate student of Puerto Rican background, the first in her family to attend college, comments on creativity and responsibility in teaching:

> "Most importantly I learned the characteristic of being a creative teacher... identifying with others, treating children with respect, honesty, knowing what we believe and being aware of your responsibility. .. I developed a book for this class about a staff member at Brooklyn College. It changed my view of the people that work at Brooklyn College because it made me see a person who succeeded in life by overcoming many obstacles. And I thought to myself, how many other professors or staff members in this schools struggle to get where they are today? ...As I learned about the children in my neighborhood I came to a decision that I wanted to teach in my community."

Yasmin's words imply an association between creative teaching and social

responsibility, and a growing awareness of and appreciation for the transitions that others have made before her. Yasmin is surprised that achievement does not necessarily follow a predetermined and predictable trajectory. She describes a sense of obligation towards her community, together with a keen appreciation for the classroom as a site of ambition and achievement, a place for considering possibilities for herself and for the children she will teach.

Crossing the bridge: The work with the Lincoln Center Institute

The students' research within Brooklyn's communities reminds us of our obligation to honor the homes and communities that contribute to children's foundational experiences, and recalls, also, our pedagogic responsibility to expand children's, as well as our own range of experiences and expectations beyond the familiar. In our work with the Lincoln Center Institute, we call upon the arts to bring a freshness and an acuteness of vision to our everyday experiences, and to consider how the arts can be woven through curricular events, sedimenting within the curriculum the intention of schooling to introduce children and learners of any age to new ways of thinking about the world and about the possibilities in their own lives.

The collaborative work between the School of Education at Brooklyn College and the Lincoln Center Institute (LCI) seeks to identify and create connections between the arts, curriculum and pedagogic practice, while connecting pre-service teacher education students to the cultural institutions of New York City. This project involves teacher education and liberal arts faculty working closely with LCI teaching artists, planning and implementing workshops on campus and at Lincoln Center and at the Museum of Modern Art. The workshops take as their focal point a work(s) of art: a painting, sculpture or installation, or a performance piece in theater, dance or music.

Extending the work in the classroom to include cultural institutions signals to our students that learning may be situated in other-than-classroom places. It leads students away from the familiar classroom site of learning, challenging them to engage with new experiences, bringing critical approaches to learning to bear on less familiar forms of representation, i.e. the arts. The workshops call upon an approach to learning that takes up questioning and reflection as learning tools (Korn & Toth, 1998), and that invites multiple perspectives regarding both works of art as well as work within the disciplines. The arts have long been recognized for their role in fostering a multiperspectival approach to learning and problem solving (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Eisner, 1992,1993; Greene, 1978, Grumet, 1995; Heath, 1991) and recognized as providing a point of entry into the lives of others (Dambekalns, 1994; Dilger, 1994). In this regard, the work with the arts mirrors the research the students engage in.

Conversation around specific works of art deepened their appreciation for the different perspectives each brought to what was, ostensibly, the same experience, and led to reflections about the role of others in developing one's own understanding. The students returned to these themes again and again in their writing, several of which are excerpted below:

> To visit a museum is more interesting in a group than alone. You look at the same painting from different perspectives, and suddenly you start to see in this

> painting something you didn't see before, and you would never come up with being alone (Olga V.).
>
> What struck me most (about the MOMA experiences) was that art does not necessarily have to be beautiful...but what struck me most was interpretation. Neither the MOMA nor the Lincoln Center performance/workshops demanded that we interpret the themes in this or that way. (Interpretation) came from our own experiences. It is essential to give students "dough" and allow them to "bake a bread" (in other words, give them some ideas to play with and make use of). That is why we should expose children to those kinds of experiences so they can learn to be responsible for what they have and what they know (Ivona L.).

Nancy, conversely was surprised at how her personal reaction differed from those of her classmates. She expressed pleasure at this discovery, and appreciation for the views of others:

> As a result of this experience I have learned that my reaction to art can be so different from others. My reaction is something that is very personal and I was amazed at the various reactions that were heard. I think that it is wonderful to be able to experience art through other people's interpretations.

For Juan, the uncertainty of responding to an unfamiliar work of art is not unlike meeting a new group of children for the first time, a challenge which calls upon a teacher's ability to understand and respond to others.

> Looking at an abstract painting is like going into a class for the first time, because in the painting you try to see and understand the painter's meaning and ideas, and when you first walk into class you don't know how the children would react. Teachers need to get to know and understand the children, I believe I felt the same way when I walked into a classroom for the first time.

The tenuousness and concomitant challenge that Juan alludes to when he describes looking at an unfamiliar work of art, or when he looks upon a new class of children for the first time, is repeated in the questions and anxieties that surround what for many students are their first excursions to New York City's major cultural institutions. The anxiety that attends these initial forays first surfaces as questions of geography and travel. Navigating public transportation is a major concern for some students who drive or travel by bus, but rarely by subway; others take two or three different subway lines to school and share their expertise and often their subway maps with their colleagues. Catherine writes:

> When I woke up in the morning, I was so anxious to be going to the city to meet for class. I wasn't really sure how to get to the museum. I just knew that I was taking the B train, but I didn't know which way I was supposed to go when I got off the train. So, when I got off the train I asked someone which way Fifth Avenue was, so that I wouldn't be lost in the city.

One year, early in the collaboration, a number of students arrived at Lincoln Center for a workshop with mothers and boyfriends in tow, signalling to us their apprehension and our need to address their misgivings early on, before the start of the workshops. Ruthie gave voice to her apprehensions and relief at having a solid excuse for missing the first workshop, though, in hindsight, with regrets:

> Until recently I have still been debating whether or not I want to be a teacher. I love to be around kids, but teaching is definitely not as easy as I thought it would be. I feel as if I am getting a lot out of doing things outside of the classroom. ..For instance, I thought I had lucked out when I missed the first MOMA visit. After going there, I now realize that I am not so lucky that the first visit fell on a (religious) holiday. It was actually more fun than I had expected. Teaching is educating children about what is out there in the world and letting them relate to it.

Takesha had already felt unwelcomed in a different museum, which she had visited the prior semester to complete an assignment. Leaning over to more closely inspect a painting, she inadvertently triggered an alarm. She recalled her humiliation as a guard approached, and other museum-goers looked her way. Midway through the first of two workshops at the Museum of Modern Art, Takesha felt tired and restless, eager to leave, despite the interest she expressed in the conversation around the works of art. By the second visit, she reported feeling more at ease in the museum, and had greater confidence in her ability to be an active participant in what was initially experienced as a somewhat intimidating place.

> On the second visit I felt a little more relaxed and I think it showed by the way I was very expressive about what the art was making me feel. I actually did not think that my filing analogy (response to Mondrian's work) would have been so widely accepted and I am glad that I spoke up instead of shying away like I sometimes do. I think Cindy described what I meant about people looking at art according to their life experiences. She felt very strongly about making each picture into a story - each story was descriptive of the city we live in, eg.the subway. I, on the other hand did not tell stories from the artwork, but I put myself into the art and said what I was feeling using elements from the painting - the straight lines, the use of color and space. Still, I just kept thinking that the only way I could use this museum in a literary way was by talking about the way people look at things differently because of their different experiences, beliefs and feelings.

Dionne directly addresses the distance she has felt from what she calls "traditional art museums," in which she expects to see neither herself nor her experiences represented. She muses on her responsibilities towards her own children as well as those she will teach. Like Takesha, she draws from the work at MOMA, increased confidence in her ability to find meaning in the art in its galleries while helping children to do so, too.

> I have taken my children to different types of museums and folk art exhibits, but I have always shied away from taking them to traditional art museums because I thought they would be bored and uninterested. As a child, I was interested in folk art because of the various colors, and I guess it was also because it depicted numerous kinds of people of color. I was not into abstract art nor any of the other artistic styles, because maybe no one helped pique my interest, but now I know that children can like and appreciate art of all kinds if only it is presented to them in an interesting and fun way. I am very excited about taking my children on this adventure because I now feel uninhibited, whereas before I thought I could not explain this type of art to my children. I really enjoy listening to my children tell about a movie, book or play they have seen; I love hearing their interpretations, descriptions, likes and dislikes, and now I can also include the art museum in dialogue with my kids. I think it's my pedagogic responsibility to expand my children's and my future students' experiences beyond what we may have thought as standard for them.

Recognizing the place of uncertainty in change and growth, and the need for teachers to rise to challenges if they are to encourage their students to do so, as well, Dominique writes:

> I think that I was feeling very sheltered within my college life, and was challenged by the idea of moving outside of the school environment and into the city scene during school hours. I did realize though the importance of stretching oneself beyond what is comfortable, and moving toward new experiences. This is a difficult concept for children. When they are very young, and have to leave the safety and comfort of their mothers' presence to move on to school, the transition is not always an easy one. There are separation issues to deal with, as well as the much needed socialization skills. The school scene poses the same challenge for the young as moving beyond the college territory posed for me.

Acknowledging the risks that inhere in teachers trying on new ways of being in the classroom, Christine calls attention to her own struggles, connecting these with the kinds of classroom experiences she hopes one day to offer the children she will teach. She points, too, to the need for teaching communities in which teachers' efforts find mutual support, leading to school change:

> We need more art in the classroom because it gives students the ability to express themselves individually, as well as in groups. ...I hope that there will be a critical mass of teachers who will come together and make change for children. It is very important to me to become a teacher who is not afraid to take risks. If you do not take risks, you can miss out on a lot of important things. I want my students to take risks and risk new ways of learning. We can do this together and help each other. ...I hope that these workshops will have a 'domino' effect among other teachers. If this occurs and if other teachers begin to see the potential (of the arts) we can find the strength to be free enough to bring these things into the classroom.

Discussion:

In claiming the space between students' lived experience and their future, imagined selves as teachers, we ask that our students venture from a place of familiar ideas, beliefs and ways of being to a place of uncertainty and difference. This place of uncertainty, risk and challenge marks the site of transformative learning, a site we hope will be recreated in the classrooms and schools in which our students will teach. In our demand that the college classroom constitute space in which comfortable places and assumptions be reconsidered, we breach our students' expectations as well as current educational lore that the ideal transition from home to school, at any age, at any time, and at any place, be 'seamless.'

Seamless transition between curricular domains and between school experiences assumes a blend of experience, a merger so successful that the contours of transition vanish. Seamlessness erases the traces of particular journeys, collapsing these into prototypic experience, a one-size-fits-all model. It calls to mind the misshapen blouse cut from whole, and hideously shiny turquoise cloth I sewed in my seventh grade home economics class. Despite this demonstrated lack of talent, it was apparent to me, a dressmaker's daughter, that the blouse's absurdity lay in its total absence of seams. From my mother I learned that it is in the skillful stitching of seams that artistry resides, and that seams not only hold fragments together, but also make alterations possible. In identifying the seams that mark the transitions that our students make, we identify, too, possibilities for alterations, for different ways of being.

In mapping our students' journeys, the paths they traverse are made visible; the geography of their migrations provides a context within which their history, in the form of biography and autobiography may take root. This work calls for curriculum to be considered in light of its relation to the lives of students and teachers, and acknowledges teachers' responsibility to create the kinds of pedagogic, personal, and creative connections which facilitate learning and animate teaching. It describes a way of thinking about the cultural lives of schools and the communities in which they reside, introducing nuance to consideration of how different cultural experiences can enter into the lives of classrooms.

It asks of us that we broaden the cultural horizon of schools to include a space for stories that represent different ways of being in the world. Bridging the world of school and home/community cultures calls forth necessary and complicated problematics, requiring a shift from an emphasis on techniques of implementation to examination of the complexities and possibilities of working with cultural stories in the classroom. The work with the oral history/storytelling project, and with the Lincoln Center Institute recalls our pedagogic responsibility to expand our students' and our own range of experiences and expectations beyond the familiar and expected. To that end we attend, as we wish our students to do with the children they will teach, to the transitions which inhere in moving between the cultures of home and school, and also, between school and the world beyond.

The work in the arts reminds us of the importance of familiarizing children with that which feels different, preparing them to risk transitions to unfamiliar worlds, expanding the possibilities that their lives hold for them. In connecting our teacher education students to both local forms of culture as well as to New York City's major cultural and arts institutions we signal their responsibility to recreate

these possibilities for the children that they, too, will teach.

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